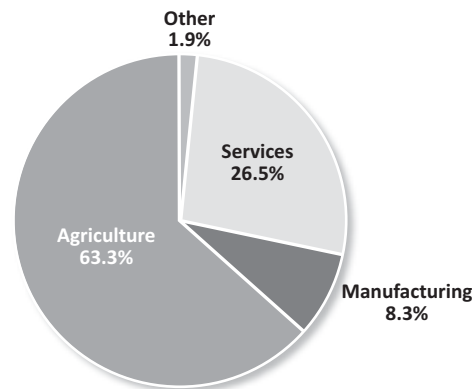


Honduras

The Government of Honduras implements a conditional cash transfer program to alleviate the poverty of vulnerable families and reduce child labor. However, children continue to be engaged in agricultural work and commercial sexual exploitation, and laws regarding the minimum age for work are inconsistent.

Statistics on Working Children and School Attendance

Children	Age	Percent
Working	5-14 yrs.	5.4
Attending School	5-14 yrs.	84.7
Combining Work and School	7-14 yrs.	3.5



Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Children in Honduras are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in agriculture and commercial sexual exploitation.²⁶⁹¹ Children work in melon and coffee fields. Children reportedly work in the worst forms of child labor in the production of sugarcane.²⁶⁹² Children working in agriculture may use dangerous machinery and tools, carry heavy loads and apply harmful pesticides. Children also work in the fishing industry, including as deckhands and divers in the lobster industry.²⁶⁹³ Children working in fishing are exposed to risks, such as severe weather conditions and drowning. Indigenous children are especially vulnerable to labor abuse in agriculture and fishing.²⁶⁹⁴

Children also work in limestone and lime production, begging on the streets, and scavenging in garbage dumps and in neighborhood dumpsters.²⁶⁹⁵ Children working on the streets may be exposed to many dangers including severe weather, vehicle accidents and criminal elements.

In addition, children, predominantly girls, work as domestic servants.²⁶⁹⁶ Child domestic labor commonly involves long working hours and often exposes children to physical and sexual exploitation by their employer. Children are also reported to work as drug mules in urban areas.²⁶⁹⁷

Honduras is principally a source and transit country for children subjected to trafficking in persons, including for the purpose of forced prostitution.²⁶⁹⁸ Women and children are generally trafficked from rural areas into commercial sexual exploitation in urban and tourist spots, such as Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula and the Bay Islands.²⁶⁹⁹

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Honduran legislation is contradictory regarding the legal age for work. The Constitution and Labor Code prohibit the employment of persons younger than age 16, but children ages 14 to 15 may work with written parental consent and permission from the Ministry of Labor (MOL).²⁷⁰⁰ However,

the Children's Code prohibits children age 14 and younger from working, even with parental permission, and establishes prison sentences of three to five years for individuals who allow children to work illegally.²⁷⁰¹ Notwithstanding, a 2007 government analysis of the legal minimum age for employment placed the minimum age at 14.²⁷⁰² An employer who legally hires a person age 14 or 15 must certify that the young person has finished or is finishing compulsory schooling.²⁷⁰³

	C138, Minimum Age	✓
	C182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
	CRC	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography	✓
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓
	Minimum Age for Work	16
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	18
	Compulsory Education Age	15
	Free Public Education	Yes

Executive Agreement STSS-211-01 prohibits all persons younger than age 18 from night work, full-time work and hazardous work, which includes working in construction, manufacturing, hunting, mining, fishing, street cleaning and quarrying.²⁷⁰⁴

All forms of forced or bonded labor are prohibited.²⁷⁰⁵ The Penal Code criminalizes procuring, recruiting or submitting children to commercial sexual exploitation. Executive Agreements prohibit the use of children in illegal activities, such as drug trafficking, and they protect children from being trafficked.²⁷⁰⁶ During times

of conflict, military service is compulsory for all capable Hondurans ages 18 to 30. However, during times of peace, military service is voluntary.²⁷⁰⁷ The minimum age for service is 18.²⁷⁰⁸

The Government sets the compulsory school age at 15.²⁷⁰⁹ The Constitution establishes the right to free primary education.²⁷¹⁰ However, associated school costs, such as matriculation fees, uniforms and transportation fees, prevent some children from attending.²⁷¹¹

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

A national commission created under the National Plan of Action to Prevent and Eradicate Child Labor II (NPAPECL II) coordinates all matters related to child labor. Members of the national commission include MOL, Honduran Institute for Children and the Family (INHFA), the Supreme Court, the Social Security Administration, the Public Ministry and other government entities.²⁷¹² The Inter-Institutional Commission Against Exploitation and Commercial Sex Trafficking coordinates the efforts of government institutions and civil society groups to combat commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking.²⁷¹³ The Inter-Institutional Commission consists of representatives from 32 partners, including several government ministries and various NGOs.²⁷¹⁴

MOL is the primary government agency responsible for inspecting labor conditions and enforcing child labor laws.²⁷¹⁵ INHFA is charged with supervising and providing technical assistance to private and public institutions that work to protect the well-being of children, including victims of child labor, and their families.²⁷¹⁶

The Workers' Commission for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor and Commercial Sexual Exploitation, created by ILO and six unions, assists in filing complaints of child labor violations with the Government.²⁷¹⁷

In 2010, MOL employed 130 inspectors, six of whom specialized in child labor inspections.²⁷¹⁸ Labor inspectors received training on the worst forms of child labor.²⁷¹⁹

During 2010, 556 labor inspections were conducted under the Program for the Gradual and Progressive Eradication of Child Labor, which exceeded the program's goal of 500 labor inspections.²⁷²⁰ MOL reported that as a result of these inspections, 96 children were assisted, and in all child labor violations, employers received fines.²⁷²¹ However, the ILO Committee of Experts has reported that resource constraints have limited labor inspections in rural areas and indigenous communities, where hazardous activities in agriculture and fishing/diving exist.²⁷²²

The Public Ministry's Office of the Special Prosecutor for Children (OSPC) prosecutes criminal cases against those alleged to have involved children in trafficking, hazardous/forced child labor and the commercial sexual exploitation of children.²⁷²³ OSPC currently is staffed by two prosecutors and three research analysts to address and prosecute child labor and trafficking cases in the country.²⁷²⁴ According to OSPC, there were no prosecutions reported under child labor laws in 2010. However, some child labor cases were addressed as violations of other laws, such as the sexual exploitation of a minor.²⁷²⁵

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The goals of the 7-year NPAPECL II prevent children from dropping out of school before they can legally work, withdraw children who are currently engaged in the worst forms of child labor, and ensure that the laws that protect children are enforced.²⁷²⁶ MOL reported that the implementation of NPAPECL II has been slow due to budgetary restraints. Nonetheless, in 2010, the Inter-Institutional Commission Against Exploitation and Commercial Sex Trafficking established regional sub-committees in San Pedro Sula, Choluteca and Danlí to oversee

local implementation of NPAPECL II. Also during 2010, the Inter-Institutional Commission participated in a campaign to raise awareness about the dangers of child labor, especially in the informal sector.²⁷²⁷

A joint effort by ILO and the Government, called the Road Map for the Eradication of Child Labor in Honduras aims to improve coordination of the Government's responses to child labor issues.²⁷²⁸ The Roadmap works at the national, regional and sub-regional levels and incorporates issues related to poverty, education, health and social mobilization.²⁷²⁹ The national poverty reduction strategy incorporates child labor issues.²⁷³⁰

Social Programs to Eliminate or Prevent the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Government of Honduras implements a cash transfer program that aims to reduce poverty and alleviate families' reliance on the income of working children.²⁷³¹ The Government of Honduras provided training on commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking to about 500 tourism sector workers.²⁷³² In addition, the National Tourism Board encouraged more than 180 operators of hotels and other businesses to sign a code of conduct that prohibits the commercial sexual exploitation of children.²⁷³³

MOL implements the My First Job program, which connects disadvantaged youth with vocational opportunities.²⁷³⁴ Strategies of the program include job skills and vocational training, internships, job placement and public-private partnerships. In 2010, the program reached about 4,500 at-risk youth.²⁷³⁵ Although such programs could reduce youth's vulnerability to the worst forms of child labor, the impact of this effort does not appear to have been assessed.

Even though the Government of Honduras has undertaken efforts to reduce child labor, additional efforts are needed to reach all of the children involved in agricultural work, fishing and commercial sexual exploitation.

Based on the reporting above, the following actions would advance the reduction of the worst forms of child labor in Honduras:

IN THE AREA OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS:

- Harmonize legislation addressing the minimum age for work.

IN THE AREA OF COORDINATION AND ENFORCEMENT:

- Increase inspections in areas particularly vulnerable to exploitative child labor, such as in rural areas and indigenous communities, where hazardous activities in agriculture and fishing/diving exist.
- Publish statistics on child labor violations, prosecutions and convictions, including the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

IN THE AREA OF POLICIES:

- Dedicate more resources to and document the progress of the implementation of the NPAPECL II.

IN THE AREA OF PROGRAMS:

- Assess the impact of social programs, such as the My First Job program, on reducing child labor.
- Implement programs to address the worst forms of child labor in agriculture, fishing and commercial sexual exploitation.

²⁶⁹¹ Data provided in the chart at the beginning of this country report are based on UCW analysis of ILO SIMPOC, UNICEF MICS, and World Bank surveys, *Child Economic Activity, School Attendance, and Combined Working and Studying Rates*, 2005-2011. Data provided are from 2004. Reliable data on the worst forms of child labor are especially difficult to collect given the often hidden or illegal nature of the worst forms. As a result, statistics and information on children's work in general are reported in this section, which may or may not include the worst forms of child labor. For more information on sources used, the definition of working children, and other indicators used in this report, please see the "Children's Work and Education Statistics: Sources and Definitions" section of this report.

²⁶⁹² ILO-IPEC, *Good Practices for the Prevention and Progressive Eradication of Child Labor in Agriculture in Central American and the Dominican Republic*, Managua, 2006, 7; available from http://www.oit.org.pe/ippec/documentos/good_practices_agri.pdf. See also U.S. Embassy- Tegucigalpa, reporting, January 20, 2009. See also Inc. Specialized Technology Resources, *Honduran Sugar: A Macro View of Today's Industry*, 2009; available from http://www.thecoca-colacompany.com/citizenship/pdf/Honduras_Sugar_Industry_Macro_Level_Report.pdf.

²⁶⁹³ ILO-IPEC, *Good Practices for the Prevention and Progressive Eradication of Child Labor in Agriculture in*

Central American and the Dominican Republic. See also U.S. Embassy- Tegucigalpa, reporting, January 20, 2009.

²⁶⁹⁴ ILO-IPEC, *Trabajo infantil y pueblos indígenas: El caso Honduras*, 2007, 42.

²⁶⁹⁵ U.S. Department of State, "Honduras," in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2010*, Washington, DC, April 8, 2011, section 7d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/wha/154510.htm>. See also U.S. Embassy- Tegucigalpa official, E-mail communication to USDOL official, July 20, 2011.

²⁶⁹⁶ ILO Committee of Experts, *Observation, Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention, 1999 (No. 182) Honduras (ratification: 2001)*, [online] 2009 [cited February 24, 2010]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/>. See also U.S. Embassy- Tegucigalpa, reporting, February 8, 2011.

²⁶⁹⁷ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2010: Honduras," section 7d. See also U.S. Department of State, "Honduras," in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2009*, Washington, DC, March 11, 2010, section 7d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/wha/136117.htm>. See also U.S. Embassy- Tegucigalpa official.

²⁶⁹⁸ U.S. Department of State, "Honduras (Tier 2)," in *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2010*, Washington, DC, June 14, 2010; available from <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/142983.pdf>.

²⁶⁹⁹ Ibid. See also U.S. Embassy- Tegucigalpa, reporting, February 8, 2011.

- ²⁷⁰⁰ U.S. Department of State, *2010 Investment Climate Report - Honduras*, June 2010; available from <http://www.state.gov/e/eeb/rls/othr/ics/2010/138079.htm>.
- ²⁷⁰¹ U.S. Department of State, *Investment Climate Report - Honduras*, June 2010; available from <http://www.state.gov/e/eeb/rls/othr/ics/2010/138079.htm>.
- ²⁷⁰² Office of Labor and Social Security official, Letter to Primero Aprendo Project Coordinator, July 25, 2007. See also U.S. Embassy- Tegucigalpa official.
- ²⁷⁰³ U.S. Department of State, *Investment Climate Report*.
- ²⁷⁰⁴ Government of Honduras, *Código del Trabajo y sus Reformas*, Decreto No. 189, (July 15, 1959), articles 127-134; available from <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/WEBTEXT/29076/64849/S59HND01.htm#t4>. See also U.S. Embassy- Tegucigalpa, *reporting, February 8, 2011*. See also Government of Honduras, *Reglamento sobre Trabajo Infantil en Honduras*, Acuerdo Ejecutivo No. STSS-211-01, (October 10, 2001), article 8; available from <http://www.glin.gov/search.action>.
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- ²⁷¹⁰ For free public education, see Government of Honduras, *Constitución*, article 171.
- ²⁷¹¹ ILO Committee, Direct Request, Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention, 1999 (No. 182) Honduras (ratification: 2001) Submitted: 2008. See also Help for Honduras, *Photo Gallery*, [[cited June 7, 2011]; available from <http://www.helpforhonduras.com/>. See also U.S. Embassy- Tegucigalpa official.
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- ²⁷³⁵ Ibid.